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TAGS: MARR MOPS NATO PARM PINR PREL GG RS
SUBJECT: THE DECEMBER 3, 2008 MEETING OF THE NATO-GEORGIA
COMMISSION IN FOREIGN MINISTERS SESSION.

Classified By: Classified by: Ambassador Kurt Volker for reasons 1.4 (b)
) and (d).

11. (U) Participants:

U.S.
Ambassador Volker
Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried
EUR PDAS Ries
NSC Senior Director Damon Wilson

NATO
Secretary General Jaap De Hoop Scheffer

NATO COUNTRIES
Albania: FM Lulzim Basha
Belgium: FM Karel De Gucht
Bulgaria: AMB Lubomir Ivanov
Canada: AMB Robert McRae
Croatia: FM Gordan Jandrokovic
Czech Republic: FM Karel Schwarzenberg
Denmark: AMB Per Poulsen-Hansen
Estonia: FM Urmas Paet
France: FM Bernard Kouchner
Germany: FM Frank-Walter Steinmeier
Greece: FM Dora Bakoyannis
Hungary: AMB Zoltan Martinusz
Iceland: Ambassador Thorsteinn Ingolfsson
Italy: AMB Stefano Stefanini
Latvia: FM Maris Riekstins
Lithuania: Under Secretary Zygimantas Pavilionis
Luxembourg: D/FM Jean Asselborn
Netherlands: FM Maxime Verhagen
Norway: FM Jonas Stoere
Poland: FM Radoslaw Sikorski
Portugal: FM Luis Amado
Romania: FM Lazar Comanescu
Slovakia: FM Jan Kubis
Slovenia: FM Samuel Zbogar
Spain: AMB Carlos Miranda
Turkey: FM Ali Babacan
United Kingdom: FM David Miliband

GEORGIA
FM Eka Tkeshelashvili

12. (C) SUMMARY. On December 3, Georgian Foreign Minister
Eka Tkeshelashvili addressed the first ever Foreign
Minister-level meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission.
Tkeshelashvili expressed gratitude to NATO for both the
political and practical support that had been granted during

a difficult time for Georgia. She welcomed the December 2 Alliance decision to deepen its relationship with Georgia, and pledged Georgia's commitment to meeting NATO standards, including through a 2009 deployment to ISAF. Allies were supportive, encouraging Georgia to use the newly-reinforced relationship structure and to continue national reforms aimed at meeting Alliance standards. END SUMMARY.

¶13. (C) Foreign Minister Eka Tkeshelashvili addressed the first ever FM-level meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission which took place in Brussels on November 3. Tkeshelashvili expressed gratitude to NATO for both the political and practical support that had been granted during a difficult time for Georgia.

¶14. (C) Tkeshelashvili expressed thanks for the EU Monitoring Mission, but asserted that Russia's "very partial implementation" of the August 12 agreement meant that security was far from assured. The Foreign Minister said she was concerned that ongoing provocations and the lack of security was having a serious impact on Georgia's ability to attract investors. She cited the deaths of nine police officers and the wounding of 11 more as evidence of ongoing lawlessness. Tkeshelashvili pledged that Georgia would always be ready to fully cooperate with the monitoring missions, and hoped that future unrestricted access into the separatist areas for the monitors could lead to useful confidence-building measures. The FM said she could also not predict whether Russia would look at other large-scale actions in the future to remove the Saakashvili regime.

¶15. (C) Tkeshelashvili underlined that Georgia would remain flexible and constructive in the Geneva process. She hoped Russia would prove itself to be interested in results rather than mere participation in the process, an approach that could lead to practical deliverables.

¶16. (C) The Foreign Minister briefed on Georgia's efforts to house the 35,000 IDPs that had been unable to return since the conflict. She also noted the political difficulties of also dealing with the population that had been displaced in the 1990's, and underscored that the right of return would be a profound political issue for these populations for the foreseeable future.

¶17. (C) Tkeshelashvili thanked the NATO Foreign Ministers for the NATO Georgia Commission, which she described as a useful tool. She looked forward to the impact of the December 2 NATO decision granting it an even more important role. The Foreign Minister hoped that a NGC meeting of Chiefs of Defense could take place in the near future, and noted that Georgia could benefit from Alliance advice when dealing with the lessons learned from the August conflict. Tkeshelashvili pledged Georgia's full commitment to developing itself to meet Alliance standards, and promised that Georgia would both develop to meet its own security needs, and contribute to collective security. She cited a planned 2009 Georgian deployment to ISAF as an example of this approach to defense.

Tkeshelashvili also highlighted that Georgia was already involved in a far-reaching process of reform in multiple areas, including the judicial system, political pluralism, and media freedom.

¶18. (C) German FM Steinmeier expressed satisfaction that NATO had been able to reach an agreement on intensifying its relationship with Georgia that could be interpreted by Georgia as progress. He acknowledged that Georgia had experienced a difficult year with "the conflict in the Southern Caucasus" but underlined that Germany had not recognized the separatist areas. Steinmeier pledged Germany's support to NATO's ongoing relationship with Georgia.

¶19. (C) Ambassador Volker expressed the Secretary's regret that she could not have attended the meeting in person. He welcomed the December 2 Alliance decision to intensify its relationship with Georgia, and encouraged Georgia to make

full use of the NATO-Georgia Commission. Volker underlined U.S. commitment to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia. He noted the need for security in areas of Russian control, underlined the importance of the Geneva process, and welcomed Georgia's plans for an ISAF deployment as an indicator of Georgia's commitment to its relationship with NATO.

¶10. (C) Polish FM Radek Sikorski struck a unique tone, saying the jury was still out on whether Russia's actions in Georgia were a one off, or a geopolitical game-changer. Sikorski observed he would have been happy to grant Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia immediately, but that the compromise strengthened the inevitability of Georgia's eventual accession to NATO.

¶11. (C) French FM Kouchner made a long intervention, explaining that he and President Sarkozy had to make difficult compromises when brokering the August ceasefire. He did not see an end to the ongoing deadlock but rhetorically asked what else could be done. Kouchner rejected Russian argument that geographical lines drawn by Stalin in the past should determine the appropriate areas of control in this crisis. He said Russia must withdraw from Akhalgori, Kodori, and Perevi. Kouchner reiterated his determination not to accept redrawing of borders by force, but also hoped IDPs could return home soon.

¶12. (C) All other speakers repeated similar positions. Significant themes included:

-- Commitment to Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty (Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Czech Republic, Spain, Romania, Denmark).

-- Assertion that Russia must withdraw its troops to the locations and levels that preceded the conflict (Estonia, Turkey, Romania, Denmark).

-- Calls for international monitors to be granted unfettered access to areas under Russian/separatist control (Latvia, Estonia, Canada).

-- Concern for the plight of internally displaced people (Bulgaria, Latvia).

-- Reiteration of interest in an international investigation into the causes of the conflict (Bulgaria).

-- Praise for Georgia's flexibility and constructive approach to the Geneva process (Bulgaria).

-- Hope that the Geneva Process will continue on a more positive trend (Greece, Turkey, Netherlands, Romania, Denmark, Canada).

-- Hope that the talks can lead to confidence building measures (Denmark).

-- Praise for the December 2 NAC Ministerial decision on deepening NATO's cooperation with Georgia (Bulgaria, Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Denmark, Lithuania).

-- Encouragement to Georgia that it should use the NATO Georgia Commission as a tool to assist national reforms (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Spain, Denmark, Italy).

-- Creation of/reinforcement of a NATO liaison office in Tbilisi (Estonia, Latvia).

-- Reiteration that no third party (Russia) can be given veto power over NATO's enlargement decisions (Denmark).

-- Praise for Georgia's ongoing commitment to national reforms (Hungary, Czech Republic, Turkey, Romania, Canada).

-- Reiteration that the degree of Georgia's success in future reforms will be the key to achieving the performance-based standards for admission to NATO (Canada).

VOLKER